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PLATE FROM THE SAN DONATO COLLECTION.

The plate shown above is an exceptionally fine and valuable example of Vienna porcelain. It constitutes a veritable picture, where all the qualities of composition, perspective and the like, peculiar to painting proper, are admirably reproduced and heightened by their application upon the beautiful and softening tone of porcelain. It is this beauty of finish that constitutes the charm of porcelain work, and the plaque we reproduce is assuredly one of the most accomplished and finished examples in this wonderful San Donato Collection. The effect produced by the nude figures brought in contrast against the black horses, is intense, and the group is full of life and movement. The distance in the landscape is excellent, while not detracting attention from the central figures. The border is rich and purposely somewhat shallow.

ART SPOILS OF AVA.

BY W. L. D. O'GRADY.

IN the Land of Rivers, where the Lord of Rubies reigns—and incidentally commits his daily murders—where, in gloomy forests are mighty ruins of great cities which were coeval with Nineveh and as magnificent, there are treasures of art of a variety which has received little attention.

Part of Burmah has been annexed to Great Britain for nearly fifty years, and it is a little singular that the military men, civil servants, and traders have not made its art products as well known as those of India or China or Japan. Some of them are admirable, and characteristic of a distinctive branch of the Mongolian races. Their lacquer work is excellent and as different from that of either the Chinese or Japanese, as those are from each other. The base of their wonderfully convenient "nests" of circular boxes, with deep covers that, like a drummer's sample case, admit of great telescopic expansion, is wicker work of fine strips of bamboo thickly plastered with mud and then shellacked. And in spite of the apparent fragility of such materials, it is wonderful what durability is attained. The outer boxes which will usually hold at least two bushels are universally used by travelers with little more ceremony than our baggage smashers award the Saratoga trunk of the period. They are carried slung at the ends of bamboo poles over men's shoulders after the fashion of the yoke with which the British milkmaid conveys her daily supplies of lacteal nutriment, and after years of service remain undented, undimmed in lustre, in fact, as good as new. Inner boxes, each with different ornamentation, but all with much red, black, and gold, are useful for all sorts of purposes from bonnet boxes to receptacles for tooth powder. Birds, beasts and fishes appear to form no part of the Burmese design for lacquer work, stripes and arabesques of interminable sentences of Buddhist lore in the remarkable character of the language predominating. The Burmese alphabet may be said to consist of one letter, a circle with apertures in various directions, (puzzling to write or read, one would think), and in itself, in lines of various sizes of type, as it were, seems to be thought as distinctive a style of decoration as a Grecian border.

The Burmese are great in gilt work and seem to make bullion go farther and last longer untarnished than other people. All their temples

are gilt from base to the "tee" or umbrella-like finial which crowns their pyramidal apices and always look fresh and bright. They are musical with innumerable bells of wonderful sweetness and power, while sonorous gongs of all sorts of odd shapes, but comparatively diminutive size, warrant the belief that the Burmese have secrets in metal working worthy of rivalry with some of "the lost arts" we hear about. Officers' wives who have resided in Burmah never fail to carry off lacquer boxes and gongs, simply because they can get nothing else produced anywhere else in the world equally perfect for the purposes required.

The carving of the Burmese is grotesque, but with a more western flavor about it than that of Chinese or Japanese. The people are humorous and it seems impossible for them to carve anything without a comic element in it. Fiends are favorites. They are not such impossible monsters as the marine and land terrors of the artisans of the Flowery Kingdom or Japan, but very much more in the vein of the gargoyles of Gothic cathedral builders. It is noticeable that a barbed tail is an indispensable appendage, though claws do duty instead of cloven hoofs.

There is a bold, free handling in Burmese carving which is very far removed from the intricate delicacy of Hindustani or Chinese work. Whether in jade, or the easily worked so-called soapstone, the Burmese artist tells his story graphically and powerfully with as few strokes of his chisel or graver as possible. The "Poughull Sawmias," or priests, are frequent butts for their fun, and a small paper weight will tell eloquently how the sly partaker of forbidden fruit is detected by sundry devils, all ready with instruments of torture to inflict the penalty for transgression. The expression in face and attitude is Hogarthian.

A favorite feature of Burmese houses is the open transom over the archway which divides the great main hall into two handsome apartments. It is a vehicle for a perfect encyclopedia of chiseled fun, well and broadly executed and with the native hues of satin wood or ebony brightened with judiciously applied gilding, is really worthy of transplantation. The "half doors" which act by way of folding doors at every opening, are not peculiar to Burmah, but are found equally in India or Ceylon. They, too, would be admirably suited for summer use here. They are practically screens about six feet high, with richly carved frames, filled in with panels of silk or paper, hinged to the door posts, so as to leave an air space of a foot at bottom. When closed, as they habitually are, they secure an amount of privacy quite compatible with plenty of ventilation, the air having thus unchecked range through a floor while the eye is limited.

Whether for mats, cushion covers or draperies, nothing can surpass the beauty of the silk manufactures of Burmah. The infinite variety of dyes in the most delicate and vivid colors and shadows of shades are worked up with immense patience by the Penelopes of the country. Some of the "Sarongs" or seamless cylindrical skirts of the native ladies and gentlemen take three or four years to make and are as delicate in design and color as a valley cashmere, while as superior to it in sheen as silk is superior to wool.

It is to be hoped that some of our enterprising purveyors of beautiful foreign decorative gems may direct their steps to Transgaugetic India. It is an unexplored, or at least an unworked, mine with much actual and suggestive value.

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To THE intelligent foreigner, just landed on our shores, there must be something intensely comical or pathetic, according to the nature of the observer, in the contrast between the showy and elaborate front of the American house—especially of the city house—and the rear. Take the plan of almost any ordinary six-room house in the city and it will be seen that the parlor is of reasonable size, the sitting-room or dining-room is made to correspond, and the kitchen, the poor unoffending kitchen, the domestic work-room, is a little narrow cramped apartment with scarcely room to turn around in after the kitchen stove and table have been put in place. What economy there is in saving a few feet of brick wall and surrendering a lifetime of convenience and comfort is a problem far beyond the intelligence of the Thinking Cap. But then the Thinking Cap always is floored by any deep abstruse problem, such as this, and feels a delicate hesitancy, so to speak, something of the same feeling which the soldier experiences in exercising that discretion which is the better part of valor, in taking hold of any question, so deep, so intricate, so overpowering as the back door question. Otherwise it might gently rise to inquire why, when so much attention is given to the fronts of houses, so little is given to the backs? Do people lavish all their money on the decoration and expansion of the front door and the bay window, with the appurtenances thereunto belonging, so that they have nothing left to build the other end of the house with? An involuntary sigh arises from beneath the tassel of the Thinking Cup as there comes up before the mind the picture of the broad roomy German kitchen, with its clean-swept hearth, its bright polished utensils in uniform rows against the spotless wall, while not the remotest shadow of dirt lingers upon the well-scrubbed floor. Here is comfort, here is satisfaction. No waste, no haste, no fretfulness; no dirty soot dropping from greasy pots upon the floor, no dishes thrown hurriedly into a corner, for a slop bath and a hasty wipe by a hard-driven and sour-tempered domestic. But all is order neatness, cleanliness, and comfort; and though sauerkraut is cooked there and bacon and beans and potatoes come out of the same receptacle with a sort of mingled flavor that is the dismay of American nostrils, still there never is seen in the German kitchen any fluid called soup, which tastes and smells like dirty dishwater. It is alike innocent of fancy dishes and of fashionable dirt. And we wish—though we wish in vain—that our American Boarding House had a less showy front and a more roomy kitchen with a more satisfactory cook.—*The Universe.*

THE most beautiful columns are usually the most simple, but to be effective must be seen in porticos and colonnades. The fact that they are the architectural outgrowth of wooden posts and tree trunks placed upright to support roofs and floors, still seems to render botanical decoration like the palm in the Egyptian capital, and the acanthus in the Corinthian capital the most natural and appropriate. The corn column of Latrobe and certain designs akin thereto, further testify to the beauty of a purely vegetal design. Where a column is slender it allows a certain amount of decoration on the shaft as well as the capital, and the idea has already been advanced of overlaying it with carvings of ivy, twining upward like the garlands on the Apprentice's Pillar in the chapel of Roslin Castle. While tramping through North Wales I came upon a lovely grove near Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerbwllgertrobwllldan-sillogogoch, (thank heaven I've got rid of that name at last; it has been pressing on my memory like a conscience for months) where every tree stem was branchless to a distance of some twenty feet from ground, and was clad in ivy. I thought that could the cool and verdant avenues of that grove be even suggested in the carvings of a cathedral aisle, it would be the wonder of the world.

DESIGN FOR SIDE OF ROOM.—In this design, given on page 57, it is intended that the mantel should be in oak or mahogany (preferably the former), and the carved figures supporting the shelf to be in the very boldest work, the panels above and below the mirror are carved richly and heavily, and the columns at either side have bands of carved work about them. The dado about the room is intended to be of wood, and the walls may be covered with Solid Relief or Linerusta Walton, as may be to the taste of the occupant. The alcove or bay window is divided from the main room by draperies, and the window furnished with brass bar through the center, from which is suspended a curtain, obscuring the lower half of the window, permitting the light to enter the room from above. The ceiling is designed for wood, and the floor should certainly be in marqueterie.